



December 11, 2014

Congressional Committees

Nuclear Weapons: DOD's Plan for Implementing Nuclear Reductions Generally Addresses Statutory Requirements but Lacks Some Detail

Nuclear weapons have long been a cornerstone of the nation's defense strategy. These weapons—deployed on strategic delivery systems, such as intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM), submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBM), and nuclear-capable aircraft—have played an essential role in U.S. policy for deterring potential adversaries and assuring U.S. allies and other security partners that they can count on America's security commitments. At the same time, arms control agreements and strategic policies have led the United States to maintain its nuclear deterrent capability with decreasing numbers of weapons and strategic delivery systems. In his April 2009 speech in Prague, the President spoke of the United States' commitment to seeking a world without nuclear weapons. The 2010 Nuclear Posture Review Report (NPR) outlined the administration's approach to maintaining the U.S. nuclear deterrent capability while pursuing further reductions in nuclear weapons.¹ The NPR report focused on five key objectives; one of these objectives, maintaining strategic deterrence and stability at reduced nuclear force levels, emphasizes the importance of bilateral and verifiable reductions in strategic nuclear weapons in coordination with Russia. In support of this objective, the United States signed a new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty with Russia—known as New START—on April 8, 2010, which entered into force on February 5, 2011.²

Section 1042 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012 required the Department of Defense (DOD) to submit a plan to the congressional defense committees, the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for implementing the nuclear force reductions, limitations, and verification and transparency measures contained in New START.³ In April 2014, DOD submitted a report on its plan to implement New START. Section 1042 also mandates that we submit a review of DOD's plan.⁴ This report assesses the extent to which DOD's report includes the elements required by the mandate.

¹ Section 1070 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008, Pub. L. No. 110-181 (2008), required the Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Secretary of Energy and the Secretary of State, to conduct a comprehensive review of the nuclear posture of the United States for the next 5 to 10 years. The Department of Defense published the conclusions and recommendations from that review in the April 2010 *Nuclear Posture Review Report*.

² *Treaty on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms*, U.S.-Russ., Apr. 8, 2010, T.I.A.S. No. 11-205.

³ Pub. L. No. 112-81, § 1042(a) (2011). Section 1042 required DOD to submit the plan not later than 30 days from the date of enactment.

⁴ § 1042(c).

Report Documentation Page			<i>Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188</i>	
Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.				
1. REPORT DATE 11 DEC 2014	2. REPORT TYPE	3. DATES COVERED 00-00-2014 to 00-00-2014		
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Nuclear Weapons: DOD's Plan for Implementing Nuclear Reductions Generally Addresses Statutory Requirements but Lacks Some Detail				
5a. CONTRACT NUMBER				
5b. GRANT NUMBER				
5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER				
6. AUTHOR(S)				
5d. PROJECT NUMBER				
5e. TASK NUMBER				
5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER				
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Government Accountability Office, 441 G Street NW, Washington, DC, 20548			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)			10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
			11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution unlimited				
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES				
14. ABSTRACT				
15. SUBJECT TERMS				
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT Same as Report (SAR)	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 6
a. REPORT unclassified	b. ABSTRACT unclassified	c. THIS PAGE unclassified	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON	

This report is a public version of a classified report that we are issuing concurrently. This report omits information on alternative force structures DOD considered for implementing New START and our detailed analysis of DOD's report, which DOD deemed to be classified. Although the information provided in this report is more limited in scope, the overall methodology used for both reports is the same.

To address our objective, two analysts independently reviewed DOD's April 2014 report on its plan to implement New START—*Report on Plan to Implement the Nuclear Force Reductions, Limitations, and Verification and Transparency Measures Contained in the New START Treaty Specified in Section 1042 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012*—which contains DOD's strategic force structure plans to comply with the requirements of the treaty.⁵ We compared the report to the requirements in section 1042 to determine the extent to which DOD's plan addresses the required elements.

We conducted this performance audit from July 2014 to December 2014 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

In summary, we found that DOD's Section 1042 report addresses or partially addresses the required elements; however, DOD did not include additional detail, including certain information on costs and verification and transparency measures, which would more fully inform congressional decision-makers on the department's plan for implementing New START.

Agency Comments

We are not making recommendations in this report. We provided a draft of this report to DOD for review and comment. In response DOD provided technical comments, which we have incorporated as appropriate.

We are providing copies of this report to the appropriate congressional committees, the Secretary of the Defense, Secretary of the Air Force, Secretary of the Navy, Joint Staff, and Under Secretary of Defense for Policy. In addition, this report is available at no charge on the GAO website at <http://www.gao.gov>.

If you or your staff have any questions about this report, please contact me at (202) 512-9971 or kirschbaumj@gao.gov. Contact points for our Office of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report. Key contributors to this report were Penney Harwell Caramia (Assistant Director), Jonathan Gill, Joanne Landesman, Brian

⁵ Department of Defense, *Report on Plan to Implement the Nuclear Force Reductions, Limitations, and Verification and Transparency Measures Contained in the New START Treaty Specified in Section 1042 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012* (April 2014).

Mazanec, Timothy Persons, Jeffrey Phillips, Steven Putansu, Michael Shaughnessy, Amie Steele, and Sam Wilson.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. W. Kirschbaum".

Joseph Kirschbaum
Director
Defense Capabilities and Management

List of Committees

The Honorable Carl Levin
Chairman
The Honorable James M. Inhofe
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin
Chairman
The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate

The Honorable Howard P. "Buck" McKeon
Chairman
The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
House of Representatives

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
Chairman
The Honorable Pete Visclosky
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
House of Representatives

(351989)

This is a work of the U.S. government and is not subject to copyright protection in the United States. The published product may be reproduced and distributed in its entirety without further permission from GAO. However, because this work may contain copyrighted images or other material, permission from the copyright holder may be necessary if you wish to reproduce this material separately.

GAO's Mission

The Government Accountability Office, the audit, evaluation, and investigative arm of Congress, exists to support Congress in meeting its constitutional responsibilities and to help improve the performance and accountability of the federal government for the American people. GAO examines the use of public funds; evaluates federal programs and policies; and provides analyses, recommendations, and other assistance to help Congress make informed oversight, policy, and funding decisions. GAO's commitment to good government is reflected in its core values of accountability, integrity, and reliability.

Obtaining Copies of GAO Reports and Testimony

The fastest and easiest way to obtain copies of GAO documents at no cost is through GAO's website (www.gao.gov). Each weekday afternoon, GAO posts on its website newly released reports, testimony, and correspondence. To have GAO e-mail you a list of newly posted products, go to www.gao.gov and select "E-mail Updates."

Order by Phone

The price of each GAO publication reflects GAO's actual cost of production and distribution and depends on the number of pages in the publication and whether the publication is printed in color or black and white. Pricing and ordering information is posted on GAO's website, <http://www.gao.gov/ordering.htm>.

Place orders by calling (202) 512-6000, toll free (866) 801-7077, or TDD (202) 512-2537.

Orders may be paid for using American Express, Discover Card, MasterCard, Visa, check, or money order. Call for additional information.

Connect with GAO

Connect with GAO on [Facebook](#), [Flickr](#), [Twitter](#), and [YouTube](#). Subscribe to our [RSS Feeds](#) or [E-mail Updates](#). Listen to our [Podcasts](#). Visit GAO on the web at www.gao.gov.

To Report Fraud, Waste, and Abuse in Federal Programs

Contact:

Website: www.gao.gov/fraudnet/fraudnet.htm

E-mail: fraudnet@gao.gov

Automated answering system: (800) 424-5454 or (202) 512-7470

Congressional Relations

Katherine Siggerud, Managing Director, siggerudk@gao.gov, (202) 512-4400, U.S. Government Accountability Office, 441 G Street NW, Room 7125, Washington, DC 20548

Public Affairs

Chuck Young, Managing Director, youngc1@gao.gov, (202) 512-4800 U.S. Government Accountability Office, 441 G Street NW, Room 7149 Washington, DC 20548



Please Print on Recycled Paper.